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Talking Points: Travel Advisory

- o Ambassador Zhu Qizhen has noted to us China's hope that we would reevaluate our travel advisory.
- o We revised our July travel advisory on August 9 to reflect changes in the security situation in China.
- o We have recently decided to revise our travel advisory for China again, in light of the relaxation of martial law in Beijing and the removal of heavily armed guards from the vicinity of our Embassy. We will announce this new advisory shortly.
- o The willingness of Americans to travel to Beijing would be greatly facilitated by a decision to lift martial law. If China were to decide its security situation were sufficiently stable to permit lifting of martial law, we could take further steps to downgrade our travel advisory.

IM/IPS/CH/IR Date: 1/14/98

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

☒ RELEASE ☒ DECLASSIFY ☐ EO Classification

☒ EXCISE ☒ DECLASSIFY IN PART

☐ DENY

FOIA Exemptions _____ TS authority to

PA Exemptions _____ ☐ CLASSIFY as () S or () C Sec. _____

☐ DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C

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Accession # 59-96-1240
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Background: Travel Advisory

- o The most recent travel advisory for the PRC was put into effect on August 9. Reporting from Beijing indicates that although martial law remains in effect there, the number of armed security personnel on the streets has been reduced significantly since August, and the security situation around our Embassy compounds has improved considerably. Martial law remains in effect in Lhasa, and there are unverified reports of continuing unrest among minority populations in Tibet as well as Xinjiang. Nevertheless, there is at least a surface appearance of a return to normal in almost all of the tourist and business centers in China.
- o Since January 1989 the travel advisory for the PRC has been revised nine times: on March 13, May 20, May 23, May 27, June 5, June 6, June 7, July 1, and August 9. Changes in conditions in China have been reflected in our travel advisories. Prior to January 1989, our most recent travel advisory was issued in January 1988 at the level of caution, and included general guidance on travel to "open" cities, travel conditions in Tibet, and advice to heed Chinese regulations.
- o Other countries have been revising their travel advisories regarding the PRC. The Japanese, the British, and some other Europeans have already lifted their advisories.
- o During a November 27 meeting, Secretary Baker told Chinese Ambassador Zhu that, in connection with other positive steps that the U.S. had taken, we had recently revised our travel advisory for China as a gesture in accordance with the improved security situation in Beijing. Ideally, we would issue this new travel advisory within the next week.
- o If the Chinese were to lift martial law and take other positive steps, we could then revise our advisory once again, possibly returning to the routine level of caution advised prior to March 1989.

Attachments:

July 1 Travel Advisory

August 9 Travel Advisory

Draft Revised Travel Advisory

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